

## **Region 6 SFIREG Report submitted by Leslie Smith, Texas Department of Agriculture**

On May 15-16, 2019, Region 6 met in Little Rock, Arkansas for the Region 6 EPA/States/Tribal/CES Spring meeting. A Pre-SFIREG session was held in conjunction with this meeting. Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Cherokee Nation and the Eight Northern Pueblos were represented at the May meeting. The topics of concern that Region 6 requested to be presented at the June 2019 SFIREG meeting are below.

### *Certification and Training Plans*

Most of Region 6 was represented at the PREP C&T course in late April. Attendees thought this was a great course and many questions were answered. Several additional items were discussed at the pre-SFIREG meeting:

- States will need timely responses from EPA when questions are presented.
- Ensure there is consistency between all state plans and that all regions have the same requirements.

An extra day may be added to the fall meeting in Dallas to train and work on state plans. Region 6 is setting up a conference call for May and will continue with regular calls to receive updates and discuss state plan requirements.

### *Section 24(c)*

All Region 6 states are in agreement with EPA's letter regarding Sec. 24(c) labels.

### *Inspector credentials*

Region 6 states are still having issues receiving inspector credentials. There is a perception among the states that Region 6 staff does not know the correct person at Headquarters to contact for credentials. The states are not clear on who is supposed to receive which credential documents. Since these issues have been unresolved for several years, there was a thought of sending letters of concern signed by commissioners/secretaries of agriculture to EPA addressing this ongoing issue.

### *Funding*

All Region 6 states will take an approximate 3% cut in funding for 2020. These declining funds each year have been met with the addition of unfunded mandates such as dicamba training, paraquat training, revision of WPS requirements, and the revision of state plans to name a few. For example, one state has had a reduction in federal funding of over \$100,000 in the last ten years. The Region 6 states agreed to only report the end of year numbers agreed to in the grant. States need to find a mechanism to show EPA the amount of state dollars that are spent on these programs in addition to the state funds required to match the grants. There is frustration among the states that EPA has expected the same number of outcomes with much less money and many more requirements to complete.